

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is the result of a frightening or scary event or situation. It is a reaction to an event or series of events that a person or community experiences as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening. Trauma occurs when that harmful event takes over your ability to cope. For example witnessing or experiencing a violent event in your neighborhood, a bad accident, or the sudden death of a loved one may cause trauma.

WHEN DO YOU NEED MORE SUPPORT?

You know yourself best. If you or those closest to you notice that your symptoms aren't getting better or that you are having other uncomfortable reactions, it might be time to contact your physician or counselor to let them know. You can also contact one of the resources listed below.

You do not have to go through this by yourself.

Resources.

For rapid crisis response services for youth and families impacted by community violence, contact the Boston Trauma Response Team. Short-term case management, coping groups, psychological first aid and consultation services are provided.

Support is available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Staff have the ability to respond within 30 minutes of notification.

Hotline: (617) 431-0125

In the event of a mental health emergency call the BEST Team at **(800) 981-HELP**.

For all other emergencies dial **911**.

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Building a Healthy Boston
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HEALING AFTER TRAUMA

**HOW TO DEAL WITH BAD THINGS
THAT HAPPEN TO YOU, YOUR
FAMILY, AND YOUR COMMUNITY**



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COMMON REACTIONS TO TRAUMA.

Trauma can impact us in different ways over time. It can make us feel unsafe, worried, or just not like ourselves. Sometimes it can even remind us of bad experiences from our past.

How you respond to trauma is personal. After a traumatic event you may experience a range of physical and emotional responses. For most however, these feelings should happen less and less over time.

While everyone responds differently, here are some common reactions that you may experience.

- Trouble sleeping
- Changes in your appetite
- Feeling tired or irritable
- Having nightmares
- Feeling nervous
- Feeling "numb" or having no feelings at all
- Feeling "jumpy" or like you need to check around you all the time
- Needing to keep your loved ones close to you
- Having "flashbacks" - seeing a replay of the trauma in your mind

WAYS TO BEGIN THE HEALING PROCESS.

There are a lot of different things that you can do to help yourself feel better in the days and weeks after a traumatic event. One of the most important things that you can do is to take care of yourself. Some things that may be helpful include:

Spending time with family and friends.

You may feel like being around people who you care about. Make time in your schedule to seek them out. Let them know that it helps you to be in their company.

Connecting with your doctor or counselor.

Call your doctor or counselor and let them know what you are going through. He or she may have some ideas for you.

Taking care of your body.

Healthy eating, drinking water and staying active will help your body stay strong and will cleanse your system.

Talking about what happened when you are ready.

When you feel ready, talk to someone you trust like your clergy, counselor or doctor.

Getting enough sleep.

Even if you are having trouble sleeping, it is a good idea to lie down and rest at night. Try to resist drinking alcohol or taking drugs to help you sleep. If you are still not able to sleep after a few days, call your doctor or counselor.

Getting back to your normal routine.

Even if you don't feel like it, sticking to your normal routine can help you keep a sense of balance.

Being kind to yourself.

After a traumatic event it's normal to feel shame or to blame yourself for what happened. But try to be easy on yourself and remember that these kinds of thoughts are normal.

